

**GOVERNMENT REFORM SUBCOMMITTEE
ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

**Mark E. Souder, Chair
September 12, 2005**

**Joint Testimony of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
and Oregon State Parks**

Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee:

My name is Paul Malmberg, Regional Director for the Southwest Region, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am pleased to be able to testify on behalf of both Washington State Parks and Oregon State Parks today. We like to think that our joint testimony is an example of a cooperative, "seamless" two-state park system, as taught us by the National Park Service.

We are pleased today to be able to give you an overview of some of Washington's major Centennial 2013 goals and to describe our involvement with a variety of federal, state, and non-profit organizational partnerships.

Washington's state parks system is 93 years old. Established in 1915, we are the nation's second oldest state parks system. In seven years, our system of 120 parks and 260,000 acres will be 100 years old. With our Centennial in mind, the seven member State Parks Commission created our *Centennial 2013 Plan*. This plan is a framework to position and guide the agency as it enters its next 100 years. It is a bold plan that focuses on renewed commitment to traditional roles, pushing the envelope for future plans, and actively connecting with our most important resource: engaged communities.

The Centennial 2013 Plan has three parts. First, six renewed Commitments to our major activities:

- to Stewardship - the protection and preservation of natural historical and cultural resources
- to Quality - the added value of interpretation at our parks
- to our Employees - to equip them with a strong customer service ethic
- to Partnerships - at all levels, to leverage scarce resources beyond status quo to improve the park experience;
- to a Stable Funding Source.

The second feature of our Plan is: Leaving a Legacy. This is the Plan's bold part. It is not only "business as usual" or the status quo, it is asking for \$100 million--yes, one hundred million dollars--as an up-front investment to kick-start the first phase of our plan and leave a legacy for the next generation of park users. And we're asking partners to buy into this legacy, with money, muscle, and organizational resources.

The third leg to our Centennial Plan is 100 Connections. This part is the community-based part; the part where local citizens make local investments to improve local state parks. This phase is a natural channel for the passion people have for parks.

Now I'd like to go a little more into partnerships--that key feature in the 2013 Plan that some of our people refer to as "park-nerships"! Partnerships are a key ingredient of Centennial 2013--in all three areas--Commitment, Legacy, and 100 Connections. In building on existing and forming new partnerships, we realize the value of leverage, the extra boost that individual, group, and governmental linkages can give our state parks.

Partnerships are the "win-win" feature of our Plan. The partners win by giving to the communities; by succeeding in business by "doing good." Of course, State Parks win too. In an era of dwindling resources, we can tap into the muscle that makes our country great: People Power. These benefits from partners are not only tangible "bricks and mortar" or interpretive shows, they are good will and the seal of public approval of well-invested tax dollars.

Washington State Parks' view of partnerships is not only people power. The view encompasses more--remember, we are thinking BOLDly here. So our Plan will work on attracting corporate sponsorships and foundation support from Boeing, Starbucks, and Seattle's Bullitt Foundation. We are trying for major investments that make a difference.

Now that you have an idea of what we think partnerships are, let me outline a few of our most important ones to date. First, is our work with the National Park Service, Oregon State Parks and other local jurisdictions at Lewis and Clark National Historic Park on both sides of the Columbia River as it flows into the Pacific Ocean. Working collaboratively, the NPS, as a marketing and management partner (using its NPS website), Oregon State Parks, through a number of state parks, including Fort Stevens, and Washington State Parks through a number of state parks, including Cape Disappointment, offer a variety of cultural, historical and natural park experiences in a "seamless" delivery system.

A second collaboration is referred to as "WORP", or the "Washington Oregon Recreation Pass" where both Oregon and Washington State Parks teamed up with the NPS, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to pilot a "one pass fits all" endeavor. Visitors can use this one pass to enter national parks in the region, park at forest service trailheads, use BLM lands and certain Corps of Engineers parks, and park for free in selected Oregon and Washington state parks. This one-pass experiment is a fine example of strong customer service and the "seamless" park system we all aspire to.

A third example of symbiotic partnerships is the Grand Coulee National Recreation Area. There, in central Washington, federal land management agencies, the National Park Service, and Washington State Parks work together for a top-notch Ice Age Floods interpretive experience (the Floods occurred 12,000 years ago and carved out dramatic landscapes in a four-state area).

Another example of a successful partnership is the Northwest Discovery Water Trail that runs from Canoe Camp on the Clearwater River in Idaho, down the Snake and Columbia Rivers to Bonneville Dam in the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area, providing kayak, canoe, and boating experiences to outdoor enthusiasts from Washington, Oregon, Idaho and visitors from all over the country. The Trail is a collaboration of **33** different agencies and jurisdictions. As we like to say, the Northwest Discovery Water Trail is the proof of the partnership pudding.

In addition to the Northwest Discovery Trail, the Lewis & Clark National Historic Park, and the Washington Oregon Recreation Pass mentioned above, Oregon State Parks provides another fine partnership example in their cooperative effort with the National Park Service in providing the Fort-to-Sea Trail, from Fort Clatsop to the Pacific. It's an example of joint park/trail management, born through partnerships.

There are other examples--in operating public information centers, coastal management, long-distance rails-to-trails management, and coordination of training for cultural/historical resource interpretation--that portend well for future endeavors that leverage the resources at all levels--federal, state, and local, but time does not permit a detailed description.

As concluding remarks, on behalf of Washington and Oregon, I cannot emphasize this final point enough: as Federal resources dwindle or are directed toward recent reconstruction efforts, these Federal, state, private and non-profit partnerships become more and more crucial to our joint mission. We view our collaborative past as a great asset, maybe even a "best kept secret." And we'll continue to view our joint future as equally valuable, as a key 21st Century asset, necessary for success in our mutual, collaborative park-based missions.

Thank you for your interest. On behalf of Oregon State Parks and Washington State Parks, I hope these remarks will help you in your future deliberations. We wish you well.

Respectfully,

Rex Derr, Director
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

Tim Wood, Director
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